

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 395

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Robert Odell Burleson of Roan Mountain.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of our friend and former colleague Robert Odell Burleson of Roan Mountain, who served from 1972 to 1986 as a member of the House of Representatives of the 88th – 90th General Assemblies, and as a member of the Senate of the 91st – 94th General Assemblies; and

WHEREAS, an accomplished legislator, businessman, and restaurateur, Robert “Bob” Burleson enjoyed success in every endeavor he undertook, from the hills of East Tennessee to the halls of the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, born in Avery County, North Carolina, Robert Odell Burleson was the son of Robert Aaron and Virginia Shell Burleson. Raised in Roan Mountain, Tennessee, he was a 1952 graduate of Cloudland High School and a 1954 graduate of Lees-McCrae College; and

WHEREAS, after completing a distinguished tour of service in the United States Army, Bob Burleson enjoyed a highly successful forty-five-year career as an owner and operator in the restaurant industry; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Burleson’s best known restaurants were Bob’s Dairyland in Roan Mountain, which he purchased and renamed in the 1960s and went on to expand the menu and enlarge the building, and O’Delly’s in Valley Forge, which he built in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, respected and admired by his peers, Mr. Burleson was named Tennessee Restaurateur of the Year in 1996, and was a member of the Tennessee Restaurant Association and the National Restaurant Association; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Tennessee General Assembly, Bob Burleson worked tirelessly to help the citizens of his district, as his numerous efforts not only led to much of the

development of Roan Mountain State Park but to untold benefits yet to come for future generations of Tennesseans; and

WHEREAS, as a most fitting tribute, the 107th Tennessee General Assembly named a segment of State Route 143, the “Sen. Robert ‘Bob’ Burleson Parkway”, in his honor as a lasting tribute to his lifetime of service; and

WHEREAS, during his lifetime, he was a member of a number of civic and charitable organizations, including the Roan Mountain Masonic Lodge #566 Free and Accepted Masons, the Jericho Shrine Temple, and the Gideons International; and

WHEREAS, a lifetime member of Magill Memorial Presbyterian Church, Mr. Burleson served faithfully as an elder and Sunday School teacher for many years; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his parents, Bob Burleson is preceded in death by his son, Todd Burleson; his sister, Bobbie McKinney; two brothers, Eddie Burleson and Jim Burleson; and a nephew, Bill Burleson; and

WHEREAS, a devoted family man, Mr. Burleson is survived by his beloved wife of fifty-six years, Gail Pritchard Burleson; his daughter, Scarlett (Rik) Anderson; his sons, Victor (Nicole) Burleson and Julian Burleson; his brother, Tom Burleson; nine grandchildren, Emmi Burleson, Megyn (Sam) Jefferson, Sophi Burleson, Hobie Burleson, Alden Anderson, Baylor Anderson, Cayden Anderson, Anthony Robertson, and Tiffany Stiles; and three great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, greatly respected and admired by his many friends and colleagues, Mr. Burleson loved Tennessee and took great pride in making his community and State a better place for all; his unmatched record in public service stands as a monument to a life well lived; and

WHEREAS, Bob Burleson leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of our former colleague, Senator Robert “Bob” Burleson, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character as a legislator, public servant, and human being, and commend his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Senator Burleson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.